

FOOD SAFETY ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, one year ago, the Senate unanimously passed the Food Safety Accountability Act. This week, the Food and Drug Administration announced that raw tuna from a California supplier has sickened more than 100 people in 20 States with salmonella poisoning. We do not yet know the cause of the current outbreak, but if enacted, the Food Safety Accountability Act would help stop outbreaks of illness related to food safety. It is time for the House to pass this noncontroversial legislation.

The Food Safety Accountability Act promotes more accountability for food suppliers by increasing the sentences that prosecutors can seek for people who violate our food safety laws in those cases where there is conscious or reckless disregard of a risk of death or serious bodily injury. Current statutes do not provide sufficient criminal sanctions for those who knowingly violate our food safety laws.

Knowingly distributing adulterated food is already illegal, but it is in most cases merely a misdemeanor, and the Sentencing Commission has found that perpetrators generally do not serve jail time. The alternative, fines and recalls, fall short in protecting the public from harmful products. Too often, those who are willing to endanger our American citizens in pursuit of profits view such fines or recalls as merely the cost of doing business.

Salmonella poisoning is all too common and sometimes results from inexcusable, knowing conduct such as that carefully targeted by the Food Safety Accountability Act. The company responsible for a salmonella outbreak last summer had a long history of environmental, immigration, labor, and food safety violations. It is clear that fines are not enough to protect the public and effectively deter this unacceptable conduct. We need to make sure that those who knowingly poison the food supply will go to jail. This bill will significantly increase the chances that those who commit serious food safety crimes will face jail time rather than merely a slap on the wrist.

Food safety received considerable attention in the last Congress, and I was pleased that we finally passed comprehensive food safety reforms, but our work is not done. A provision almost identical to the Food Safety Accountability Act has previously passed the House with strong, bipartisan support. Now that the Senate has unanimously passed this bill, it is long overdue for the House to act.

The American people should be confident that the food they buy for their families is safe. The uncertainty and fear caused by the current salmonella outbreak only reinforces the need to pass the common sense Food Safety Accountability Act. I urge the House to quickly pass the Senate bill and join us in taking this important step toward protecting our food supply.

TRIBUTE TO IRENE DAVEY

Mr. BROWN of Massachusetts. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Irene Davey of Attleboro, MA, who on January 26, 2012, turned 104 years of age. It is a privilege for me to join her family, friends and veterans everywhere in extending warm wishes to Irene.

In March of 1943, Irene joined the U.S. Army and served until November 1945. Irene had a distinguished military career where she earned the rank of staff sergeant. She was part of a force of about 351,000 women who served in World War II. Irene served in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps and was assigned to motor transport.

While serving in the Army, Irene directly contributed to the success of the motor corps by training the other women in the auxiliary corps to drive trucks and provide vehicle maintenance. One of her duties while serving in the motor corps included transporting sick and injured soldiers home by ambulance. She even became a recruiter, using what she had learned in the Army to bring in the next generation of soldiers.

Irene understood the true meaning of shared sacrifice. The motto of the time was "release a man to help your man." According to Irene it meant that if a woman could take a man's job, that man was released to join the armed forces. That made the armed forces stronger, helping your man who was in the armed forces be that much safer.

After World War II, Irene continued her service by becoming a warden at the election polls in her hometown of Attleboro. Irene is an exceptional woman who has served her country and community in many ways. Irene has been a champion for veterans all her life and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts owes her its deepest gratitude.

There is nothing Irene likes more than hearing someone thanking a veteran for their service. Today, however, the Senate recognizes Irene Davey the poet, songwriter, and lifelong public servant.

Irene has witnessed many wonderful events during her long and distinguished life. Throughout her years, she has demonstrated that one person can make a difference. It is people as dedicated as Irene who continue to make a difference in this world. Others should take notice and become inspired by the example that she has set.

I would like to thank Irene for her tremendous service to our country and our communities. I know that her family and friends, as well as the people of Massachusetts are extremely proud of her selfless service.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO BOWEN FLOWERS

• Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I am pleased to commend Bowen Flowers of Clarksdale, MS, for his service and con-

tributions to the State of Mississippi while serving as the 77th President of Delta Council. The Delta Council was formed in 1935 and has grown into a widely respected economic development organization representing the business, professional, and agricultural leadership of the alluvial floodplain commonly known as the Mississippi Delta. I am grateful to Delta Council for its continuous role in meeting the economic and quality of life challenges which have historically confronted this part of my State.

Bowen Flowers' tenure as president of Delta Council has coincided with the development of a new farm bill, the primary legislation for establishing Federal agriculture and food policies. Mr. Flowers has used his insight and judgment to lead the Delta Council in effectively working with Congress to help ensure that the priorities of those living and working in rural America are met. He is also recognized for his dedication to conservation and wildlife as part of his ongoing service to Mississippi.

In addition to his role as president of Delta Council, Mr. Flowers is a director of Staplecoth Producer Cooperative and the Covenant Bank, and is a commissioner on the Coahoma County Soil and Water Commission. Some of his previous leadership positions include director of the Mississippi Association of Conservation Districts, president of the Mississippi Soybean Promotion Board, producer director of the National Cotton Council, president of Delta Wildlife, and chairman of the Delta Council Soil and Water Committee.

Bowen Flowers is well respected in Mississippi and his performance as president of the Delta Council will add to his well-earned reputation of working to improve the quality of life of rural America. His dedication to the future of the Mississippi Delta and those who live there speaks highly of him as a person. In Mississippi, we appreciate Bowen Flowers, as well as his wife Susan and their daughter Anderson, for their service and commitment to Mississippi.●

TRIBUTE TO ALFRED RANKINS, SR.

• Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I am pleased to commend Alfred Rankins, Sr., of Greenville, MS, for his tireless and effective leadership while serving on the Washington County Board of Supervisors. Mr. Rankins recently retired from the board following a long career dedicated to protecting and enhancing the lives of the residents of Greenville and Washington County, and people throughout the Mississippi Delta. Washington County has historically faced a unique set of challenges, and I am grateful for the board's consistent leadership in willingly addressing these challenges on a daily basis.

Al Rankins has served Washington County long enough to understand the